

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner  
Health Insurance Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
December 16, 2014, 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.  
State of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training  
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73-1  
Cranston, RI 02920-4407

**Attendance**

**Members**

Co-Chair Commissioner Kathleen Hittner, Co-Chair Stephen Boyle, Karl Brother, Rob Cagnetta, Pat Mattingly, Hub Brennan, Bill Schmiedeknecht, Vivian Weisman, Al Charbonneau, Gregory Allen, Mike Souza, Al Kurose, Tammy Lederer, Emmanuel Echevarria, David Feeney

**Issuers**

United Healthcare: Kevin Callahan

**State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Staff**

Linda Johnson, Sarah Nguyen, Cory King, Tarah Provencal, Maria Casale, Jay Garrett

**Not in Attendance**

Howard Dulude, Peter Quattromani, William Martin, David Mathias, Wendy Mackie, Emmanuel Falck

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome and Review of November Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Hittner and Mr. Boyle called the meeting to order and welcomed all Health Insurance Advisory Council (HIAC) members and others in attendance.

The minutes from the November 18, 2014 HIAC meeting were reviewed. Al Charbonneau asked to clarify that his use of the word “shock” was meant in the sense that an economist might use the word to discuss a market disruption. The minutes were approved with this clarification in mind.

**2. Healthcare Reform Commission and Healthcare Leaders Group Update**

Dr. Hittner updated the Council on the work done by a group of healthcare leaders convened by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. Dr. Hittner was a participant in the group which was made up of representatives from healthcare insurers, primary care practices, medical schools, mental health providers, hospitals systems and state government. The group met four times. The meetings were facilitated by the Rhode Island Foundation. Dr. Hittner said that over the course of the meetings the group put together a

Compact outlining agreed upon payment and delivery system reforms. The RI Foundation staff compiled notes from the meetings into a draft Compact which was now being circulated to the participants for their signature. Once signed, the Compact will be delivered to the incoming Governor.

The Commissioner also announced that Rhode Island would be receiving a \$20 million grant from the federal government as part of the State Innovation Model (SIM).

### **3. RIREACH Consumer Update**

Manny Echevarria updated the Council on consumer calls received by RIREACH. The most recent trend includes calls from patients billed unexpectedly for services provided by out-of-network providers. Manny gave an example: a patient goes in for surgery at a hospital or facility in-network, with an in-network surgeon. But the anesthesiologist who is used is outside of the patient's network. The patient is then billed for this service at the out-of-network price.

RIREACH also has been receiving a lot of calls from Blue Cross subscribers whose coverage was dropped despite their continuing to pay their premiums. Commissioner Hittner helped explain that there was a technical issue with HealthSource RI and Blue Cross that caused this to happen. HealthSource RI and Blue Cross were working to resolve the issue. Manny said that for the consumers who called RIREACH the problem was easy to fix once Blue Cross was notified.

### **4. Affordability Standards Update**

Sarah Nguyen reported that attendance for OHIC's public comment hearing for the proposed revisions to the Affordability Standards was low, but that a lot of comment was submitted in writing. Sarah said that most stakeholders' comments included good suggestions. She highlighted two themes that came up in the comments: one was that some stakeholders were concerned about caps tied to the regional consumer price index (minus food and energy), another was specific suggestions as to who should be represented on the committees proposed under the revisions. Stakeholders also urged OHIC to coordinate with other payment and delivery system reform initiatives in the state. She said that OHIC was reaching out to some commenters for clarifications.

### **5. Legislative Agenda**

Tarah Provencal, OHIC's Associate Director for Planning, Policy and Regulation, updated the Council on OHIC's legislative activities. She began with a review of some of the bills that OHIC supported or opposed in the 2014 legislative session. From there, she turned to the upcoming legislative session. In 2015, OHIC would like to submit a bill that updates and conforms state legislation with the Affordable Care Act. OHIC—subject to approval from the incoming Governor—will also propose legislation in regards to the Blue Cross Direct Pay hearing. Tarah explained that Blue Cross currently goes through a unique formal hearing process for their Direct Pay rates. This process is separate from OHIC's regular rate review. At the time the legislation requiring this formal hearing process was enacted, Blue Cross was the only carrier selling insurance to individuals. While this is no longer the case, Blue Cross is still required to go through this process. OHIC, Tarah said, would like to include Blue Cross' Direct Pay plans

in the same rate review process the other carriers now go through. This would be more efficient and less costly. It would also be more accessible to consumers.

Tarah also outlined some topics of interest to OHIC that could potentially come up in the 2015 legislative session, including benefit mandates and utilization review.

#### **6. Public Comment**

Ted Almon, CEO of Claflin Co., said he appreciated the “great energy” around the different health care reform efforts, but as different groups proliferate there is an “obligation” for those groups to coordinate. “I think we need to be conscious of that.”

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Health Insurance Advisory Council will be January 20, 2014, 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M., at the State of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73-1, Cranston, RI 02920-4407.